तव कथामृतं तप्तजीवनम्
tava kathāmṛtaṁ tapta-jīvanam

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THE VISVA VAISHNAVA RAJA SABHA

Srila Thakur Bhaktivinode

When and where was the Visva Vaishnava Raja Sabha first established? What is the goal of this *sabhā*?

The Visva Vaishnava Raja Sabha was established in Calcutta in April of 399 Sri Chaitanya Era (1884). The goal of the society is to improve the Vaishnava religion in various ways. The goal and rules of this society were written in a Visva Vaishnava brochure. Under the guidance of this *sabhā*, various pictures of the pastimes of the Lord have been painted. A Vaishnava trust has also been established. Because of a lack of funds we have yet to establish an assembly hall, a temple of Lord Chaitanya, and a printing press, but we have no doubt that soon Mahaprabhu will arrange for all these. (*Sajjana-toṣaṇī* 2.1)

When were the Visva Vaishnava Raja Sabha and the Vaishnava Sabha merged?

A center for the Visva Vaishnava Raja Sabha has been constructed in Sarkar Lane, Kansaripara, and in Calcutta. A huge conference for this *sabhā* was held on the last Saturday in July, and the resolutions of the *sabhā* were published in the daily newspaper after a few days. Under the care of the General Secretary, Sri Lal Mohan Dutta, the activities of the *sabhā* went on smoothly.

It was written that the Bharatvarshiya Hari Sadhana Samaj and the Vaishnava Sabha have merged with the Visva Vaishnava Raja Sabha. But as far as we know, the Vaishnava Sabha has not merged completely. Although the Vaishnava Sabha is very eager to benefit the *sabhā*, it will not merge fully with the Visva Vaishnava Raja Sabha unless it approves of the activities of that *sabhā* for some time. Moreover, the Vaishnava Sabha has been established for one year and it will continue to maintain its separate identity until the Visva Vaishnava Raja Sabha is established. Because the goal and activities of both *sabhās* are the same, Visva Vaishnava Raja Sabha will soon merge with its parent *sabhā*, the Vaishnava Sabha. ❁ (*Sajjana-toṣaṇī* 2.3)

— *Śrī Bhaktivinoda Vāṇī Vaibhava* 33.24-25, compilation and questions by Sundarananda Vidyavinode. Translated by Bhumipati Das, Published by Iswara Das and Touchstone Media. Vrindavan. 2002.

THE CORRECT ANGLE OF VISION

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasawati Thakur Prabhupada

Question: I cannot understand this world.

Answer: It is camp life. This world is not our original abode. It is meant for certain purposes. After that, we are to proceed to our original home. This world is not a desirable place. It is not good to be enticed to stay here for a long time, forgetting our original abode. We stay there with Godhead. We are the eternal servants of Godhead. When we decide to lord it over the universe, we are allowed these facilities for temporary purposes. They do not serve our eternal purposes. It would be better to search for a

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place where we can find real peace. Here we are always liable to be disturbed. By these disturbances, providence wants to teach us that this world is not our eternal habitation, but that all real peace is to be found in Him. Being thus troubled, we would naturally like to go back to the original place. Life in this world should be conducted peacefully instead of in a spirit of retaliation. We should learn to suffer all these things by submitting to His holy wishes. If we do so, we may have that very peace here. It is because we are ambitious to dominate that we are brought here. Conditions here are so that they dovetail the whole position. If we require more than we are allowed, we are in trouble. Better if we go back to our own position, to our only friend. He is the only resort of all our needs and desires. If we take the burden upon ourselves to run into wrong, we run into troubles in the shape of our daily transactions. We should not be so tempted. The aesthetic culturer's offers are meant to delude us when they lead us to think this world to be a comfortable place. All real improvement should lead to Godhead. It should give us all useful things by which to get rid of these temptations. As we are men, we should lend our ears to know about the better situation of the transcendental world, where the best aspects of the reality are exhibited. Here we suffer from the difficulties of our eclipsed vision. It is, therefore, better to look after that region where all sorts of manifestive nature are in vogue.

The servitors of Godhead will always look to our interest. In this world, our friends sometimes like us and sometimes they turn against us. But here there is opportunity of hearing about our original home from the lips of persons who are quite familiar with the same. If we neglect the opportunity, we shall repent in the long run. Their words will lift us and change our mentality. All sorts of puzzling questions will be solved if only we give our lending ear to those persons who have very little to do with this world. Our situations in this world are liable to change like fogs and mists. As intelligent men, our prudent nature should manage sometimes to hear of the transcendental world and the manifestive nature, instead of being unaccountably diffident. Such incredulous attitude will not give us the opportunity.

This external body will be changed, and also our present situations. But we have a transcendental frame. As soon as we will learn that the transcendental frame is working in us, this mortal coil will cease to trouble. The people of the West think that the mind is the soul. We differ from them. There exists an ample Indian literature in support of the view that the soul is the proprietor of the mind. The mind is the proxy of the soul to deal with the external world in five different relations as husband and spouse, master and servant, parent and child, as friend and as neutral. The soul is now enwrapped by some foreign agency. Body is different from apparel. The soul is enwrapped by the gross and subtle material bodies. They are meant for the use of the soul for a certain period. When the true activity remains latent then the mind acts with the impetus of the senses alone, covering the soul by the material molecular substances. But the soul is the real entity.

The senses are the working things, some of them for external and some for internal use. Grossness has an attraction for the ordinary run of people. It is meant for such people. Even the so-called philosophers are found to subscribe to the slogan that the gross material body should have the preference in all religious affairs of this world (*śarīram-ādyaṁ khalu dharma-sādhanam*). They are very busy with the gross and subtle material things, ignoring the health of the soul. Material things will change. This change sometimes gives us facilities and sometimes hinders our progress. But the soul does not change and cannot be destroyed, although he is susceptible to being covered by the subtle or abstract form of material grossness in the shape of our passing mentality which is a gift of *māyā*. She has given us senses to measure pleasing things for our selfish aggrandizement. Religious people think they need not gratify the senses, which are meant to delude only. As, for instance, we are liable to be deluded if we assume the air of the atmosphere is meant for our enjoyment or for giving us temporary pleasures.

We are liable to be troubled by these impeding agents. Their number will show us that they are more numerous than the things that can give us bliss, the only thing that should be sought. The ecstatic center is in Godhead. All of the pleasing sensations of this world, if properly judged, are found to be for temporal purposes only, in order to have our fruits later on. It is the training plane. On this plane we are

liable to suppose that everything is meant to serve us. But the real truth is that we are to serve Godhead in the five different capacities. It is only when we deem it fit to come down to this world to lord it over other finite entities for our enjoyment that our real position is forgotten to some extent. This contingency arises when we want to deprive our Lord. That tendency was innate with us. It led us to prefer this temporal region by our own desire. These entanglements will be slowly removed when the true suggestions will come to us on our meeting with persons who are cognizant of our interest.

So-called "optimistic" people want to avoid such apparently pessimistic thoughts. They prefer to run into the troubles. But we should have our only resort in the absolute. Aural reception is the only track that we should follow. We should be prepared to hear how we can live a peaceful life and aspire after eternal bliss from the absolute who can give it. Unless we submit to Him, there is no possibility of getting to the eternal region. If we do otherwise, we will be multiplying speculations that will only act as hindrances to us. Instead of posing as the predominating agent, we should pose as predominated agents in order to serve Godhead. He is the source of all manifestive things; and all activities should tend to Him without hoping for any commercial return. We are Philistines averse to theological thought. We are for making money, earning fame and enjoying pleasures. This is the natural inclination here. All this non-absolute propaganda is due to aversion to the service of the absolute. We should, therefore, lend our ear to the descriptions of transcendence in order to be able to understand how to get the true fruit of the soul instead of being misled by the mind. The mind is the proxy of the soul. He is always on the look-out for aggrandizing his own interest at the expense of the principal if the latter thinks to pass his days in indolence, when he will be naturally deluded by the mind. The slumbering soul requires to be roused up. The best use of our intelligence, foresight, desirability, should be to make progress towards the eternal life. Temporal pleasures are bound to trouble us in the long run. ✿

— Conversation with Major Rana N. J. Bahadur at Armadale, Darjeeling, on 14 June 1935. Originally published in The Harmonist (Vol. XXXI, No.21) on 27 June 1935.

The Villain Mendicant

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

Expert learned scholars say that laughing is generally found among youngsters or in the combination of old persons and young children. This ecstatic loving laughing is sometimes also found in persons who are very grave by nature. Once an old mendicant approached the door of mother Yasoda's house, and Krishna told Yasoda, "My dear mother, I don't wish to go near this skinny villain. If I go there he might put Me within his begging bag and take Me away from you!" In this way, the wonderful child Krishna began to look at His mother, while the mendicant, who was standing in the door, tried to hide his smiling face, although he could not do so. He immediately expressed his smiling. In this instance, Krishna Himself is the object of laughing affairs. ✿

—From chapter forty-five of *The Nectar of Devotion*.

The Process of Hearing

Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja

Śrīmad Bhāgavatam is the essence of all Vedic literature. Only by hearing *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* can one achieve the supreme perfection. In the *Bhāgavatam* (10.14.3), Lord Brahma has stated:

jñāne prayāsam udapāsya namanta eva
jīvanti san-mukharitāṁ bhavadīya-vārtām
sthāne sthitāḥ śruti-gatāṁ tanu-vāṅ-manobhir
ye prāyaśo 'jita jito 'py asi tais tri-lokyām

Those who, even while remaining situated in their established social positions, throw away the process of speculative knowledge and with their body, words and mind offer all respects to descriptions of Your personality and activities, dedicating their lives to these narrations, which are vibrated by You personally and by Your pure devotees, certainly conquer Your Lordship, although You are otherwise unconquerable by anyone within the three worlds.

The disciplic succession means the hearing process. It is a descending order. The *māyāvādīs*, speculators, never hear. They never come under this *śrotra-paramparyā*, this hearing process in disciplic succession. They want to understand the Supreme Personality of Godhead by their speculation, with their own mundane scholarship and knowledge, but they cannot. The Supreme Personality of Godhead is only understood by the descending process, the hearing process. *Śrotra-paramparyā* is recommended. Therefore Lord Brahma said,

jñāne prayāsam udapāsya namanta eva jīvanti sanmukharitāṁ bhavadīya-vārtām — those who give up *jñāna-prayas*, the speculating process, and only hear from bona-fide authorities, *vaiṣṇavas*, can achieve the supreme perfection. *sthāne sthitāḥ śruti-gatāṁ tanu-vāṅ-manobhir* — There is no need of changing your position. If one is in a *brahmacārī* position, let him remain in the *brahmacārī-āśrama*. If one is in a *gṛhastha* position, let him be in the *gṛhastha* position. If one is in a *vānaprastha* position, let him be there in the *vānaprastha* position. If one is in a *sannyāsa* position, or *jāti-vrata* position, let him be there. There is no need of changing one's position. Only hear *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* from the bona-fide authority. Sri Parikshit Maharaja only heard. He had only seven days to live. He was the emperor of the whole world and a great devotee. During his reign there were no disturbances, no revolution, no fighting, nothing. Everyone was living very peacefully and happily under his rule. Cursed by a *brāhmaṇa-brahmacārī* he knew that he had only seven days left in his life. He gave up everything, his kingdom and empire, went to the bank of the Ganges, sat down, and observed *payo-vratā* — he didn't take any food and he didn't sleep. All of the sages, saints, *devarṣis*, *rājarṣis*, and *maharṣis* came there to see the emperor under whose rule they were all peacefully doing their *bhajana*. Parikshit Maharaja asked them one question, "I have only seven days time and my life will pass away, what shall I do to achieve the supreme perfection?" It is said, *nānā-muni nānā-mata* — so many philosophers were there with their many different philosophies, and they all gave their different opinions, but it was not decided what to do. At last Srila Sukadev Goswami came, and Parikshit asked him the same question, "What shall I do?" Sukadev Goswami said, "You should hear *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, *kṛṣṇa-kathā*." Hearing this, everyone unanimously approved. So Srila Sukadev Goswami continuously narrated *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* for seven days, and Parikshit Maharaja only heard. *śravaṇe parīkṣid abhavad vaiyāsakiḥ kīrtane* [Rupa Goswami's *Padyāvalī*, text 53] — Parikshit Maharaja only heard and Vaiyasiki, Sukadev Goswami, the son of Vyasadev, only did *kīrtana*. Thereby they achieved the supreme perfection. *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* is such a scripture, the essence of all Vedic scripture.

Śrīmad Bhāgavatam is the commentary of *Vedānta-sutra*. *Vedānta-sutra* was compiled by Srila Vyasadev and he himself has given the commentary, this is *paramahaṁsa-samhitā*, it is a commentary of *Vedānta-sutra*. But the *māyāvādīs* don't speak from *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*. When they give the commentary of *Vedāntra-sutra* they give the commentary compiled by Sankaracharya known as *Śārīraka-bhāṣya*, an imaginative commentary. It is not a proper, bona fide commentary. Therefore In *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*madhya* 6.169) Sriman Mahaprabhu has said:

> *jīvera nistāra lāgi' sūtra kaila vyāsa*
> *māyāvādi-bhāṣya śunile haya sarva-nāśa*

For the deliverance of the *jīvas*, Vyasadev has given a commentary on *Vedānta-sutra*, *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*. Don't listen to *Māyāvādi-bhāṣya*, don't listen to the commentaries of *Māyāvādīs*. *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*antya* 5.131) has cautioned us:

> *yāha, bhāgavata paḍa vaiṣṇavera sthāne*
> *ekānta āśraya kara caitanya-caraṇe*

Go to a *bhakta-bhāgavata*, a *vaiṣṇava* who is the embodiment of *Bhāgavata*. Who is well conversant with *bhāgavata-tattva*. Approach him and hear *Bhāgavata*, study *Bhāgavata* under his guidance, then you can have knowledge of *Bhāgavata*. Then you can get Krishna's mercy and the *Bhāgavata's* mercy, *grantha-kṛpā*, because *Bhāgavata* is non-different from Krishna. *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* is such a scripture, *nitya-bhāgavata-sevayā*, every day one should hear *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* from the lips of a devotee *bhāgavata*. It is daily activity.

— Lecture in Brisbane, Australia, 29 October 1990

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